

 <b>KENTUCKY YMCA YOUTH ASSOCIATION KENTUCKY YOUTH ASSEMBLY Bluegrass Bill</b>	<b>Blue   BG 45</b>						
	<b>Referred to Committee: House 3</b>						
<b>Authors:</b> Addison Burchett, Hadley Burchett	<b>Action on the Bill</b>  <table> <tr> <td><b>House</b></td> <td><b>Senate</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>___ <input type="checkbox"/> Passed</td> <td>___ <input type="checkbox"/> Passed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>___ <input type="checkbox"/> Defeated</td> <td>___ <input type="checkbox"/> Defeated</td> </tr> </table>	<b>House</b>	<b>Senate</b>	___ <input type="checkbox"/> Passed	___ <input type="checkbox"/> Passed	___ <input type="checkbox"/> Defeated	___ <input type="checkbox"/> Defeated
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<b>School:</b> West Carter HS							
<b>City:</b> Olive Hill							

1 An act to create more employment opportunities and provide incentives to hire non-violent felons to aid their re-  
2 entry to society.  
3

4 **Be it enacted by the Youth Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky**

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6 Section 1: After inmates are released from prison their struggles are far from over. Often, these offenders are  
7 faced with numerous obstacles in their re-entry into becoming functional members of society as well as part  
8 of the workforce. Not only do these ex-cons face the challenge of being stereotyped by many potential  
9 employers, but their lack of recent work experience and necessary skills to aid the job hunt coupled with  
10 nearly 40,000 collateral consequences make the job search for ex-offenders nearly impossible. The stress of  
11 unemployment also increases their risk of alcohol and drug abuse, especially for those who already have a  
12 history of these issues.  
13

14 Section 2: Despite recent efforts, two of Kentucky's greatest problems, unemployment and incarceration rates,  
15 have soared. According to a recent statistic, 70% of inmates were unemployed during the time of their arrest,  
16 illustrating the direct correlation between prison populations and employment; therefore, making employment  
17 a crucial factor in combating Kentucky's rising incarceration rates. Kentucky's state prison population has "far  
18 outpaced the national average, rising 45 percent in the decade ending in 2009, compared to a 13 percent  
19 nationwide," stated in an article in PBS Frontline, making Kentucky's incarceration rate 7th in the world.  
20

21 Section 3: In response to this dilemma, the proposed solution is that we focus on prioritizing rehabilitation  
22 through employment within the walls of prison so that prisoners develop a cohesive plan for employment upon  
23 release. This solution would establish more employment opportunities and give employers an incentive to hire  
24 non-violent ex-cons, so they do not become a part of the many repeat offenders and are able to find a source  
25 of employment. According to a 2007 article in Criminology & Public Policy, there are as many as 800  
26 occupations that automatically disqualify people with felony convictions for life; therefore, we would like to  
27 propose that unless the crime is substantially related to the licensed activity, non-violent offenders should be  
28 given the opportunity to obtain these career licenses after 6 months. For instance, a person with a history of  
29 selling drugs, should not allowed to become a pharmacist; however, a person with this same history should not  
30 be prohibited for the rest of their lives from being a barber. The final change we would like to put forward is to  
31 provide a tax write-off (based on a ratio of: # of employed felons to employees without a record up to 2%) for  
32 small businesses hiring non-felons to decrease the stigma that accompanies a criminal conviction.  
33

34 Section 4: According to an article in wfpl.org, we spend approximately \$18,000 per inmate and Kentucky  
35 lawmakers have Section 4: According to an article in wfpl.org, we spend approximately \$18,000 per inmate  
36 and Kentucky lawmakers have increased this budget by \$362 million. Our bill will combat these expenses by  
37 reducing the amount of returning offenders and programs needed to support convicts returning into society. If  
38 passed, this bill will be enacted January 1, 2017, in order to ensure there is time for application of these  
39 changes.  
40

41 Section 5: This bill is crucial to Kentucky because the inability to find obtain a legitimate source of income,  
42 often leads to illicit or illegal means creating a never-ending cycle of poverty and repeat offenses. It should  
43 not be easier for a citizen to sell drugs than find a job.